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SUBJECT: SOUTHEAST TURKEY PRESS SUMMARY FOR MAY 17, 2006

This is the Southeastern Turkey press summary for May 17, 2006. Please note that Turkish press reports often contain errors or exaggerations; AmConsulate Adana does not vouch for the accuracy of the reports summarized here.

POLITICAL, SECURITY, HUMAN RIGHTS

OZGUR GUNDEM: The daily carried in its front page that the records of the telephone calls made by Ali Kaya, a non-commissioned officer and one of the three defendants of the Semdinli case, has been received by the Van Prosecutor's Office.

The record reportedly revealed that Kaya established a network of business connections with businessman, contractors, transporter company owners, and factory owners in the southeastern region. The records allegedly further reveal that "oppression", "threats" and "expropriation" characterized the nature of the relationship Kaya established with such people.

ZAMAN / CUMHURIYET: The place of the court hearing that continued to try the specialized sergeant Tanju Cavus, who has been accused of killing one person and wounding five more during the unrest that took place following the Semdinli bombing last year on November 9 in Hakkari's Semdinli district, was transferred from Hakkari to Malatya at the March 17-dated second hearing of the case. The third hearing will be held tomorrow (05/18).

BOLGE / EKSPRES: The dailies have carried the decision of local CHP party administration to refer businessman Bulent Ozulku to party disciplinary committee with a demand to expel Ozulku from party, a news item which has recently shaken CHP's Adana chapter and caused controversy in the local political arena. Ozulku was a candidate who had run for Adana mayorship in previous local elections in Adana.

EKSPRES: The daily asks a question on why the Seyhan Mayor Azim Ozturk (from AKP) did not choose to have PM Erdogan open the newly constructed big facility called "Dream Park" (see press summary 05/15) during Erdogan's visit to Adana last week. Whether PM Erdogan did not personally favour it, or whether Ozturk did not think about it, or whether some people convinced Ozturk that the facility was not yet ready to be opened during Erdogan's visit were the questions the asked by the paper.

EKSPRES / ZAMAN / RADIKAL / CUMHURIYET: Former President Suleyman Demirel, who delivered a speech at Adana's Cukurova University, said that authorities should differentiate between the people and the terrorist components in Turkey. And the people, on their part, should not follow certain circles seeking nothing but adventure, and everybody should undertake responsibility to work for the unity of the state, according to Demirel.

HURRIYET (CUKUROVA): Agriculture and Animal Breeding Fair of

Mersin will start today at 11 a.m. State Minister Kursat Tuzmen will open the fair. Former President Suleyman Demirel, DYP (True Path Party) National Leader Mehmet Agar and Minister of Agriculture Mehdi Eker will participate in the opening ceremony.

OZGUR GUNDEM: Turkish Supreme Court sent a second letter of warning to DTP that required DTP to change some articles of the party charter. DTP officials have reportedly not responded to the February 20-dated first letter of warning which demanded a change in the article that defined the co-chairmanship concept, a DTP-initiated first implementation in Turkey which the Supreme Court objects to on grounds that co-chairmanship was in non-conformity with the Turkish Political Party Act.

OZGUR GUNDEM: The military operation that was started by the soldiers at the rural sections of Siirt one month ago has reportedly been continuing. Demirkaya village of Siirt's Erueh district has reportedly been blockaded by a 100-vehicle convoy and the road checks between Siirt and Erueh has been intensified. Another military operation has reportedly been started in rural sections of Bingol. The area is reportedly being bombarded intermittently by Cobra helicopters.

OZGUR GUNDEM: Patrick Cockburn, a journalist from Independent newspaper, reportedly interviewed with people in the Qandil Mountain in Iraq where PKK headquarters are located. A news article authored by the journalist reportedly read that Kurds had no other friends than the mountains.

OZGUR GUNDEM: Many people, who are relatives of disappeared people from around the world, came to Diyarbakir to attend the 5th International Conference on People Disappeared under Detention which has been organized by ICAD (International Committee against Disappearances) and Turkish Yakay-Der

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(Solidarity Association for the Family Members of Forcibly Disappeared People) (see press summary 05/15). The major organizations to attend the conference are as follows: Iraqi Patriots' Union, Iranian Kurdistan Democracy Party, People's Liberation Front in Palestine, and Solidarity Committee for Political prisoners in Chile, Bulgaria's Labour Party, etc.

OZGUR GUNDEM: A lawsuit has been brought against the organizing committee of the March 21 Newruz celebrations in Kars's Ardahan district on charges that unauthorized banners and posters were used and illegal slogans were chanted during the celebrations. Three senior members of DTP's Ardahan branch including the district chairperson will be arraigned next month on these charges. Separately, Sabahattin Suvagci, former DEHAP (Democratic People's Party) Hakkari provincial chairperson, who was arrested during a March 22 raid on his house and who was accused of aiding and abetting the terrorist organization, has been released upon second objection submitted by his attorneys against his arrest.

OZGUR GUNDEM: People have reportedly been showing great interest in the English language course that has been started by the Public Relations Office of the Derik Municipality in Mardin.

OZGUR GUNDEM: A Kurdish hacker group named "Coldhackers" hacked a Turkish bank's and some local media organizations' websites. The group pledged to defend the Kurdish values within the virtual environment.

RADIKAL / HURRIYET (CUKUROVA): Incoming number of tourists in Diyarbakir has decreased by 40 per cent, said the Culture and Tourism Director of the province. This was not only an aftereffect of terrorist incidents in the region, but also a decrease in the cultural and economic events held in the city has led to lesser number of foreigners coming to the city.

BOLGE / ZAMAN: Thirteenth Film, Culture and Arts Festival of Adana will be take place between June 5 and 11.
REID